

Mercy: a ROY ORBISON pilgrimage

JAN. 25 - APRIL 18, 2008



“Mercy” is not just a celebration of a rock n’ roll legend; it is a tribute to music fans whose devotion resembles a spiritual pilgrimage. Dallas collector and entrepreneur Glen Agritelley is one of those “devoted” fans. In this premier exhibition at the Tempe Center for the Arts, Agritelley shares his passion for everything Orbison: posters, gold records, signed photographs and guitars. It is the world’s largest private collection of Roy Orbison memorabilia, spanning four decades of the development of the artist’s music, persona and influence upon other musicians.

“The music of Roy Orbison has been instrumental in shaping the hearts, minds and souls of generations of listeners and musicians world-wide.”

- Peter Lehman

Agritelley’s devotion to Orbison is a part of his everyday life. Parts of his family home have been made an homage to Orbison. Agritelley drives a 1985 black Porsche convertible which belonged to the singer, his wine bar in Dallas is named “Mercy” after lyrics from the song “Pretty Woman” and, as a musician, he has played with members of Orbison’s band.

Peter Lehman, Director of Arizona State University’s Center for Film, Media and Popular Culture is another lifelong fan and exhibition contributor. Lehman is such a devotee that he wrote Roy Orbison - The Invention of an Alternative Rock Masculinity, a look at Orbison’s career and the uniqueness of his songs, singing and performance style. Both Lehman

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and Agritelley admit to being a little “nutty” about their shared obsession. They are not alone. Orbison’s music and persona are revered to this day by fans all over the world.

But Orbison’s legacy isn’t the same as the over-the-top pop culture iconic celebrities like Elvis Presley or Marilyn Monroe. Orbison fans remember him as “the voice.” His songs are like long lost friends or cherished memories. His heartfelt sentiments, yearning vocals and mysterious persona continue to be revered by life-long members of “devoted,” and the timelessness of his music and messages will continue to embrace new generations for years to come.

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“Mercy: A Roy Orbison Pilgrimage” would not be possible without a community of supporters and partners. Agritelley, by lending his collection he shares a piece of his heart and soul; Lehman,

whose love and enthusiasm for the project helped bring everyone together; and Barbara Orbison, whose efforts keep Roy’s legacy alive.

The city of Tempe and the Gallery at TCA would like to thank the Friends of Tempe Center for the Arts, Star Dot Star Design, Target, Arizona State University, Cort Furniture, Barrett Jackson and Client Compounder for their help with this exhibition.

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